

NOTES



PRAYER

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word,
and encouraging us in our meeting together.
Take us and use us to love and serve you,
and all people,
in the power of your Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer Book for Australia

OPENING QUESTION

(OPTIONAL)

Who is the most generous person you know personally? Tell us about why you consider them generous.



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WORD

¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

[2 Corinthians 8](#)

⁶The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

[2 Corinthians 9](#)

"Our Christian habit is to bewail the world's deteriorating standards with an air of rather self-righteous dismay. We criticize its violence, dishonesty, immorality, disregard for human life, and materialistic greed.

"The world is going down the drain," we say with a shrug. But whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Let me put it like this. If the house is dark when nightfall comes, there is no sense in blaming the house; that is what happens when the sun goes down. The question to ask is "Where is the light?"

Similarly, if the meat goes bad and becomes inedible, there is no sense in blaming the meat; that is what happens when bacteria are left alone to breed. The question to ask is "Where is the salt?"

Just so, if society deteriorates and its standards decline until it becomes like a dark night or a stinking fish, there is no sense in blaming society; that is what happens when fallen men and women are left to themselves, and human selfishness is unchecked.

The question to ask is "Where is the Church? Why are the salt and light of Jesus Christ not permeating and changing our society?" It is sheer hypocrisy on our part to raise our eyebrows, shrug our shoulders, or wring our hands. The Lord

Jesus told us to be the world's salt and light. If therefore darkness and rottenness abound, it is largely our fault and we must accept the blame.--and for Your perfect might, and for Your perfect love, and grace, and mercy that You would share these things with us. That when we need wisdom. God, I know there's people right now, I know I'm one of them, and many people listening to this right now praying with me who need wisdom, who need wisdom in our lives in so many different ways.

[John Stott \(Human Rights and Human Wrongs\)](#)

[Richard Stearns, The Hole in Our Gospel: What Does God Expect of Us?](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being never and 10 being always), how would you rate your capacity to let go of treasured things you own? Why would you rate yourself this way?
2. Can you tell of a time that someones generosity impacted your life? What happened and how did it impact you?
3. One of the ways that the Gospel can be seen in our society is the generosity of God shown in the people of God being generous in their living. What are ways that you might be able to show this generosity?
4. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." What does this mean for you in the way that you give?
5. 2 Corinthians 8:3-5 talks of how the church's voluntary giving is used for the "relief of the saints" and that they give of themselves, firstly to God and then by the will of God to those involved in ministry for their livelihood. How might we be examples of the generosity of God in the way we give of "our own accord" to him?
6. Would you choose today to trust Jesus as the LORD of your life - ruling in all things, including and especially in our finances? Will you enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your lifegroup leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to be the master of my life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. I declare that I am Yours, and You are mine, In Jesus name, AMEN.